



## Fleurs Depargne - Intro



A current floral industry buzzword is "boxed flower program". This refers to the practice of selling flowers to the consumer in a box, normally through distribution channels other than the traditional retail florist. Some boxed flowers come directly from growers, some come from order fulfillment centers. In all cases, the flowers are delivered by a freight service such as FedEx. Big players in the boxed flower program game are Proflowers, Growers Flowers, Flowers by Martha, and, perhaps surprisingly, FTD. You may want to check out [fleursdepargne](#) for more.

Traditional florists and the businesses that support them, such as traditional wholesale florists, are rightfully concerned about the competition they are receiving from vendors who sell flowers this way. They are also concerned about the effect these flowers are having on the consumer flower market's perception of value. The fear is that if sub-standard quality flowers and floral services are being sold, the overall demand for flowers will fall; that the boxed flower programs are giving flowers in general a bad name. According to an FTD consumer survey, florists believe that consumers who receive boxed flowers are disappointed in the quality, price and service. However, consumers asked the same questions respond overwhelmingly that they are more than satisfied with their flower buying and receiving experience through boxed flower programs. Perhaps, the florists are responding to good science that shows that the single most important factor in prolonging the eventual vase life of flowers is the cold chain. In other words, flowers kept cold from post-harvest to home will perform best. In boxed flower programs, flowers leave the farm or order fulfillment center via a shipping company that does

not have refrigeration. Flowers are generally out of the cold for 24 hours before reaching the recipient. I would challenge florists to consider how many hours their flowers are out of the cold chain before the consumer receives them. Do their flowers sit in buckets in their design room? Do completed arrangements sit in the garage waiting to be delivered? Are their delivery vans, and the delivery vans of their suppliers refrigerated?



It is my assertion that [flowers delivered](#) in boxes and flowers delivered by florists have equal chances of good performance, provided everything goes well at each stop along the distribution channel from farm to home. Tremendous effort and pride is taken in the proper care and handling of flowers in the floral industry, however the more hands handling the flowers along the way, the more chance there is for a break in the chain. There are those who charge that boxed flower retailers are using marketing tactics, which mislead consumers to believe they are ordering flowers from a local florist. Should this be found to be the case, the traditional retail florist would certainly have a right to be angry. Laws of this great country generally support a level playing field. It's this nuance of the argument that goes unnoticed by many florists. While FTD loudly fights against those unfair marketing tactics, they are not so quick to mention their own boxed flower program. On the surface, FTD appears to be fighting the battle to protect their retail florist members while it seems to me that they are protecting their own interest as a competitor to those very same traditional retail florists who are their customers.

